IMPROVING MODELLING FAULT TOLERANCE BASED ON ASPECT-ORIENTED DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

Fault tolerance is a mechanism that is used in the design of systems with high reliability. Software fault tolerance usually is achieved through the diversity and redundancy that it adds additional complexity to the system design, and it focuses on the crosscutting concerns that will affect overall software units. Implementation of the fault tolerance techniques through the approaches such as object oriented programming reduce reusability, maintainability, and degree of the system modularity because crosscutting concerns distribute among objects and increases complexity , therefore to reduce the complexity aspect-oriented introduced. Aspect-oriented is a new thinking approach that separate crosscutting concerns from the components. Aspect oriented approach can be used in the high complex systems and implementing fault tolerance. Some works and research are performed in this filed but for fault tolerance techniques such as recovery blocks there is not any aspect-oriented model or design patterns. The main purpose of this study is modelling fault-tolerant technique based on aspect-oriented approach. Hence a highly used fault tolerance technique such as recovery blocks is selected for study and investigated to model by aspect-oriented. Therefore, crosscutting concern has been identified and is modelled aspect-oriented approach. Then a design model that is called the "aspect-oriented design model recovery blocks" is introduced in order to improve the reusability, maintainability and system modularity. The proposed model was evaluated with a case study by some metrics such as separation of concerns, level of dependability between components and size of program and their advantages and disadvantages has been described against object-oriented approach. As the result showed, the aspect-oriented model can decrease complexity by improving crosscutting concerns distributions and therefore improve system modularity that increases reusability and maintainability.

ABSTRAK

Kesalahan terkawal adalah satu mekanisme yang digunakan didalam sistem dengan keboleh percayaan tinggi. Kesalahan terkawal dalam satu perisian biasanya dicapai melalui pengembangan dan pengulangan yang menambah kompleksiti rekaan sesuatu sistem dan ia menumpukan kepada kerisauan tentang pengubahansuaian yang akan memberi kesan kepada keseluruhan unit perisian. Implementasi kesalahan terkawal melalui pendekatan seperti pengaturcaraan berasaskan objek mengurangkan keboleh gunaan, keboleh selenggaraan dan darjah modulariti sistem kerana pengubahsuaian dibahagikan antara objek dan meningkatkan kompleksiti, disebabkan itu untuk mengurangkan kompleksiti orientasi berasaskan aspek diperkenalkan. Orientasi berasakan aspek adalah satu kaedah menyelesaikan masalah pengubahsuaian dari komponen perisian. Di sebabkan orientasi berasaskan objek boleh di gunakkan dalam sistem yang kompleks dan mempunyai kesalahan terkawal. Beberapa kajian telah dijalankan dalam bidang bagaimanapun, dalam perkara seperti halangan kembali masih belum ada pendekatan orientasi berasaskan aspek. Jadi kajian ini memilih bidang halangan kembali untuk mengkaji model orientasi berasaskan objek. Disebabkan itu kerisauan tentang pengubahsuaian telah dikenalpasti. Kemudian satu rekabentuk model yand dinamakan *aspect-oriented design model recovery blocks* diperkenalkan untuk meningkatkan keboleh gunaan, keboleh selenggaraan dan modulariti sistem. Model yang dicadangkan di nilai menggunakan kajian kes dan matrik seperti kerisauan terasing. Darjah kebergantungan antara komponen dan saiz program dan kelebihan serta kekurangan berbanding pengaturcaraan berasaskan objek. Berdasarkan keputusan yang ditunjukkan, orientasi berasaskan aspek mengurangkan kadar kompleksiti dengan memperbaiki pengubahsuaian seterusnya meningkatkan modulariti sistem, serta menjadikan keboleh gunaan dan keboleh selenggaraan semakin meningkat.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO	-	Aspect Oriented
OO	-	Object Oriented
CBC	-	Coupling between Components
DIT	-	Depth of Inheritance
VS	-	Vocabulary Size
NOA	-	Number of Attributes
CDC	-	Concern Diffusion over Components
CDO	-	Concern Diffusion over Operations

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the safety-critical systems modifications and changes are very important and are time-consuming because of the various tests and validation tasks that should be performed after each change. Fault-tolerance is one of the most known methods for designing safety-critical systems. Reality, fault tolerance is the ability of a system to continue performing its intended function despite faults. Fault tolerance is used in the designing of systems with high reliability. Fault tolerance usually is achieved by diversity and redundancy mechanisms. The fault tolerance is a non-functional requirement that usually adds high complexity in the design of safety-critical system when is implemented based on an approaches such as object oriented, because of cross-cutting concerns. Crosscutting concerns consist in software system features having the implementation spread across modules as tangled and scattered code. In many cases, these crosscutting concerns represent design model, invocations to model features. When a design model evolves, this can cause the addition or the change of scattered and tangled code, which contributes to the evolution of the crosscutting concern. A concern is scattered if it is related to multiple target elements, and tangled if both it and at least one other concern are related to the same target element. A crosscutting concern is a concern that is scattered.

1.2 Background of the Problem

Recently, the use of aspect-oriented programming in the field of fault tolerance has become one of the research topics. Fabry (1998) used aspect-oriented programming to define a "replication" aspect in order to improve the reusability and greater transparency of replication in the distributed environment. Also Szentiványi and Nadjm-Tehrani (2004) used aspect-oriented programming to improve performance and maintainability of fault-tolerant servers built with middleware support and migrate some operations of FT-CORBA middleware into application level. In this research, an existing FT-CORBA platform was used and performed some modifications was performed to support the aspect-oriented application extensions. Szentiványi and Nadjm-Tehrani's (2004) results showed that aspect-oriented programming can be used to implement non-functional requirements specially for availability and reliability. This two quality attribute can be improved by object replication mechanisms. Herrero and Sánchez (2001) presented a replication model named JReplica based on aspect-oriented programming. JReplica can separate characteristics of the replication code from functional behaviours of objects. Also, it is possible that programmers define new behaviours to determine fault tolerance requirements. The model presented by Herrero and Sánchez (2001) on the aspect-oriented architecture includes two levels (Figure 1.1):

- Functional Level: In this level Object functionality is defined and two new entities (in, out) in order to communicate objects with its aspects attached to each object.
- Aspect Level: In this level, aspects are defined. Each object can be associated with one or more aspects.

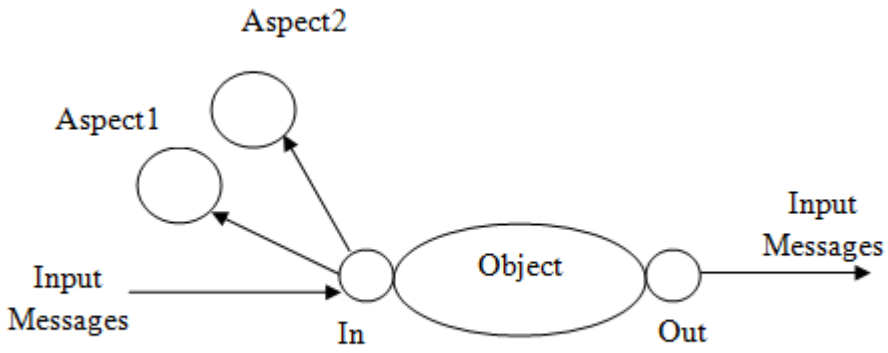

Figure 1.1 The aspect model (Herrero, Sánchez, 2001)

Alexandersson and Öhman (2010) provided one of the best works about the use of aspect-oriented programming to implement fault-tolerant tactics. Alexandersson and Öhman (2010) have been defined a set of fault-tolerant mechanisms which include: recovery cash, time redundant, recovery blocks, runtime checks and control flow checking. Also each one of these mechanisms is surveyed and implemented by AspectC++ language and analyzes recovery blocks mechanism for a specific case study. Alexandersson and Öhman (2010) noticed that time redundant, runtime checks and control flow checking mechanisms can be implemented well in an aspect-oriented programming language.

Afonso and Silva (2008) provided a fault tolerance approach for application programmers of real-time embedded systems in the operating system core by aspect-oriented. Afonso and Silva (2008) introduced a fault tolerance framework and then used it as aspect and implemented using aspect-oriented programming. Figure 1.2 shows the framework.

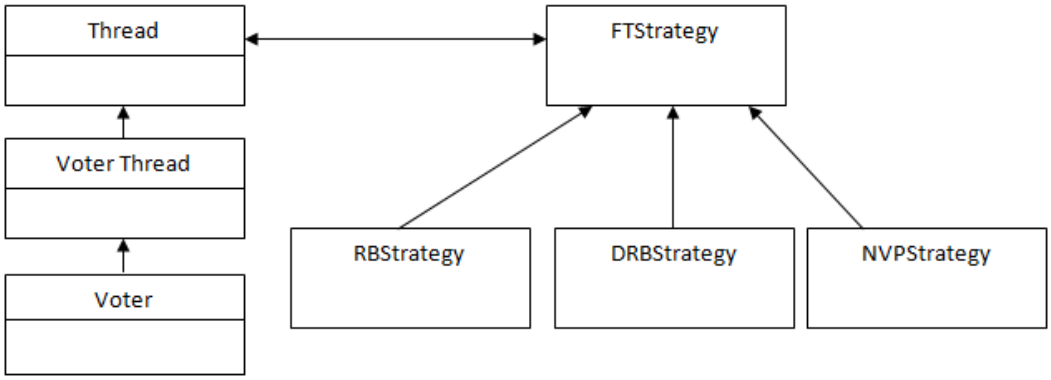

Figure 1.2 Fault tolerance framework (Afonso and Silva, 2008)

A few researches have focused on introducing and implemented aspect-oriented programming patterns. Hameed and Williams (2010) provided a design pattern on the base of aspect-oriented for error detection. Also Chavez (2004) and, Castor Filho and Garcia (2007) introduced an Error handling pattern to manage exceptions (Figure 1.3).

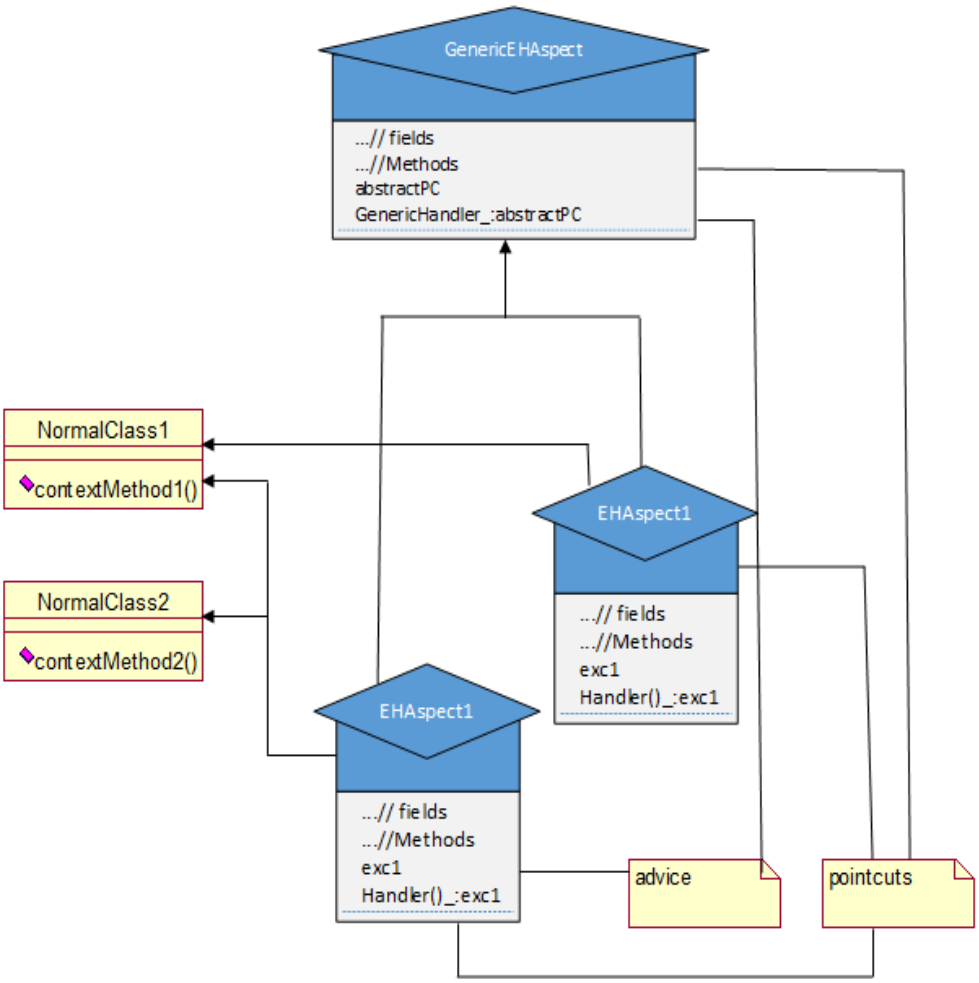

Figure 1.3 Fault tolerance of Design Pattern Base on Aspect Oriented (Hameed and Williams, 2010)

1.3 Problem Statement

Fault tolerance is used in the designing of systems with high reliability. Fault tolerance usually is achieved by diversity and redundancy mechanisms. The fault tolerance is a non-functional requirement that usually adds high complexity in the design of safety-critical system when implemented based on an approach such as object oriented, because of cross-cutting concerns. Cross-cutting usually includes two problems: tangling and scattering. Tangling is a component implementation with more than one requirement and scattering is the one with one requirement.

In this research we believe that aspect-oriented design reduces the complexity and also improves the performance of safety-critical systems because Object oriented approach focuses on the improvement of the code and programming (implementation) while aspect oriented one focuses on the concerns. In this research, the accuracy of the solution and response to improve fault tolerance are evaluated and also it is focused on the reduction of the complexity and improvement of the performance of fault tolerant design by aspect-oriented approach.

1.4 Goal

The main goal of the research is to improve the fault tolerant techniques by using aspect-oriented design in order to reduce the complexity and improving the performance of safety-critical systems.

1.5 Objectives

- To investigate and select techniques of the fault tolerance design.
- To propose fault tolerance model using aspect-oriented concept.
- To evaluate performance and complexity of fault tolerant design by the proposed model.

1.6 Scope

In addition to fault tolerance, there are other method to achieve the high dependability and high reliability that are beyond the scope of this study. Also, fault tolerant design can be implemented in hardware or software and/or different levels of software such as the operating system, middleware and application level. In this study, the scope is application level of fault tolerance will be used and using AspectC++.

In this section, the scope of the research is given based on each objective as below:

To investigate and select techniques of the fault tolerance design: In the first objective, it is crucial to have a solid understanding on the concepts of fault tolerance techniques such as Recover blocks, N-Version programming, Distributed recovery blocks, N-self checking programming, Consensus recovery blocks and Acceptance voting, and then select better technique. According to some concepts in Literature Review is selected recovery block because of this technique is the main technique.

To propose fault tolerance model using aspect-oriented concept: Based on the investigation to achieve the first objective, the model based on aspect oriented design is proposed in order to, reduce complexity and improve performance.

To evaluate performance and complexity of fault tolerant design by the proposed model: Based on the investigation to achieve the second objective, it is crucial to have a solid understanding on the some metrics such as, separation of concern metric, coupling metrics and size programme metrics. And use these metrics for compare between object oriented model and aspect oriented model.

1.7 Deliverables

Each phase in the research has contributed to the deliverable documents as below where these reports are provided in the future chapters in this thesis:

- Concepts and techniques report (Chapter 2)
- Proposed models report (Chapter 4)
- Proposed models evaluation report (Chapter5)
- Conclusion (Chapter6)

1.8 Summary

In this chapter the problem was stated and, solutions and objectives were proposed. In this research it is believed that aspect-oriented design reduces the complexity and also improves the performance of safety-critical systems because Object oriented approach focuses on the improvement of the code and programming (implementation) while aspect oriented approach focuses on the concerns. This research, evaluates the accuracy of the solution and response to the improvement of fault tolerance also focuses on the reduction the complexity and improving the performance of fault tolerant design by aspect-oriented approach. Crosscutting concerns consist in software system features having the implementation spread across modules as tangled and scattered code. In many cases, these crosscutting concerns represent design model, invocations to model features. When a design model evolves, this can cause the addition or the change of scattered and tangled code, which contributes to the evolution of the crosscutting concern.

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